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SUBJECT: Darfur: Increased Dangers, Reduced Humanitarian Access,  
Suggested Steps

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1. USAID/DCHA Khartoum recently produced a report on the changing security environment in Darfur and its impact on the delivery of humanitarian goods and services, particularly in the event of increased displacements. Post hereby offers the report below, which it believes will be of interest to a broad audience.

2. The text of the document is as follows:

(Begin text)

Risk Assessment and Planning in Response to Wider Conflict and Increased Tensions in Darfur

Summary

In all three states of Darfur, humanitarian agencies have experienced decreased access, increased insecurity and an influx of new IDPs since the signing of the DPA. According to the Khartoum Monitor, on August 8, the U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator Manuel da Silva stated that escalating violence in Darfur had killed more aid workers in the previous two weeks than in the last two years. According to da Silva, humanitarian access is at its lowest level since the Darfur operation began, and operational risks for aid workers are increasing daily. In addition to deaths, there has been an increase in hijacking of NGO vehicles, attacks on cars, looting, and attempted ambushes. These attacks include vehicles stolen during food distributions, and theft from NGO compounds.

If this situation continues to worsen, international humanitarian organizations may be forced to further diminish their presence. In order to prevent this from happening, there are a number of steps that can be taken immediately. If the scenario of a worsening situation does unfold, there are steps that can be taken to minimize the humanitarian crisis.

Current Situation

Currently levels of violence are increasing in rural areas outside of the state capitals, which remain (relatively) safe. DCHA can still work with our local partners based in state capitals and they in general still have reasonable access to areas outside of the capitals. There are windows of opportunities to explore areas (accessible by helicopter) outside of state capitals based on improvements in security. These windows provide us the chance to develop relationships with more community based organizations outside of the capitals, but remain problematic because of the difficulty for regular/consistent implementation.

Even with the opportunities to explore outlying areas, programming will still be significantly circumscribed by overall levels of violence. This situation is unlikely to change in the near future.

In West Darfur, there has been only a limited presence of

international organizations, due to increased insecurity which resulted in December 2005 in a significant draw down of international staff in the state. Since this time, NGOs are able to travel by helicopter to some locations, but are not able to regularly access rural areas.

In South Darfur, although the security situation remains delicate, there has been greater access to vulnerable populations than in the other two states. However, shifting allegiances between the Arab and non-Arabs may increase violence in the near-term, as parties try to obtain more land. This could significantly decrease access to South Darfur. As well, increased violence against groups so far not affected in the crisis may increase the needs and number of internally displaced.

In North Darfur, insecurity has increased, and with it access has been restricted. The U.N. has determined that the Melit-Kulkul-Tawila triangle is off limits for humanitarian activities. USAID staff has observed SLA/MM fighters entering camps in North Darfur recently. Many INGOs have recently reported the presence of guns in camps at the household level. This situation is creating a new dynamic in camps where humanitarians and IDPs are harassed and occasionally targeted for violence.

#### Risks of Further Deterioration and Responses

##### Greater displacement

There are currently between 20,000 and 25,000 new IDPs in North Darfur. If fighting continues, humanitarian workers in North Darfur may have to support between 40,000 and 50,000 IDPs. Much of the area is insecure due to tribal tensions and fighting between SLA-MM, Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), SLA-Abdel Wahid, National Resistance Front (NRF), and Chadian forces. Continued fighting between DPA signatories and non-signatory groups is anticipated to increase displacements in and around North Darfur.

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Should additional displacements occur in North Darfur, newly displaced would likely go to either El Fasher or an existing camp housing extended family members or people of the same ethnic/tribal group. Al Salaam and Zam Zam camps are currently open and would be able to register more IDPs. The new fighting may result in the second, third, or fourth displacement of some IDPs, who may decide to go to the main town and settle there. Other secure areas for IDPs may include Kutum town, Kassab, and Fata Borno camps. USAID humanitarian programming would respond with the provision of essential life-saving services to displaced populations in camps or host communities.

##### GOS Harassment of Local Populations

Since the DPA was signed, there has been increased harassment of USAID local grantees, such as Bakhita Charitable Organization, Amel Center, SUDO, and SIHA. This is often done under the guise of implementing the peace agreement. This harassment includes arrest and detention of those who voice disagreement of the DPA or who provide legal defense for individuals who have been arrested for voicing their disagreement. USAID/DCHA will develop better methods of communication with the Political Office about individual instances, so that if the Embassy chooses to intervene, it will do so with field knowledge.

##### Decreased Safety of International Organizations

Tension in camps is high, especially those camps where the Fur comprise a significant portion of the population. In the August 8 press release, Da Silva stated that many NGO and U.N. staff now fear for their safety if they enter camps and are often reluctant to do so. USAID and its partners are engaged in building the capacity of Sudanese staff and local organizations. Should the security situation deteriorate to a point where expatriate staff is either evacuated or unable to travel to the field, some ongoing work could continue. There may be a limited number of cases where OTI would be able to use its small grants mechanism to fill some programmatic

gaps left behind in IDP camps.

#### DPA Implementation in a Deteriorating Scenario

Some Darfurian leaders still believe the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation (DDDC) is the best way to encourage Darfurian populations to lay down their weapons. While it is not possible to reopen discussion of the contents of the DPA, as a framework document the Darfur Peace Agreement could allow civil society to express its concerns through the DDDC. In principle, the DDDC would ease tensions and channel activity away from violence. USAID is prepared to support the African Union to start the process by seconding at least one staff person, who had similar experience with the Loya Jirga process in Afghanistan.

#### Role of Land in Further Conflict

Increasing tension and conflicting interests between Fur and Zaghawa could certainly lead to open conflict between the groups, with outside influence and support. Zaghawa would likely continue their alliance with the Sudanese government (and possibly with the northern Abbala Arab groups), and the Fur have reason to align with the Massalit and have shown a budding alliance with the southern Baggara Arab groups. Abbala Arabs are commonly without their own land and migrate through areas with the consent of others while Baggara Arabs have their own Dars (homelands). In Jebel Marra, Abdel Wahid al Nur is believed to have signed an agreement with local Arab militia commanders to cooperate against outsiders who may attack the region. The possibility of this cooperation is further supported by the fact that they are the traditional landholders and want to defend the dar/hakura system.

While the campaign against the non-Arab landholders (primarily Fur, but also others) has been successful in many areas and people are displaced into camps, Jebel Marra remains the biggest prize and is still in the hands of the Fur and allied with the former SLA-Abdel Wahid. It is possible to speculate that the heavily armed and powerful (yet poor in terms of land ownership) alliance of Zaghawa and Abbala Arabs would align themselves for a large land grab. The Sudanese government, now including SL/M-Minni Minawai, could actively support this campaign using the DPA as cover --i.e., treating non-signatories as "terrorists." UN agencies and NGOs are reporting such attacks. Experience shows that the Chadian government may very well arm or otherwise support the Fur in a campaign to keep the Sudanese government busy fighting on their own soil in an effort to prevent further Sudanese military engagement against Chad.

Possible suggested ideas for immediate action to support:

Sensitization programs in the camps regarding the consequences of the existence and storage of weapons at the household level.

Internally displaced persons (IDP) service provider capacity by

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international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) established and developed in the rural areas (perhaps in coordination in key village locations, eg. (Wada'a, Dar Salaam, Muzbat, Tawillah, Mellit).

Provision of essential services to existing and newly displaced populations. Such services would include shelter provision, food assistance, water and sanitation interventions, and health service provision.

Establishment of funding for Quick Impact Projects that would allow for supporting innovative ideas like those above and others developed by DFO partners.

Should violence come to state capitals and force international NGOs to retreat, DCHA's work would be dramatically curtailed. In all likelihood, protection activities in places like IDP camps will be dramatically reduced due to access problems. If just DCHA is forced to withdraw to Khartoum, programming will probably continue, albeit in a more difficult operating environment.

If violence increases to the point where even local organizations have difficulty accessing areas outside of state capitals or even in state capitals, then we will have to rethink our strategies entirely.

DCHA Response:

In Darfur, humanitarian assistance was initially focused on displacement camps located near urban areas, sometimes to the detriment of vulnerable communities and IDPs in more remote locations. DCHA will continue to provide shelter, food, water and sanitation, health, and other essential life saving services in areas of displacement. Efforts will be made to provide more assistance to conflict-affected rural areas to stabilize communities and to lay the foundation for large-scale IDP returns.

Humanitarian agencies are doing what they can, where they are located. Health and water are the most needed services, but IDPs add that food assistance is needed. Partners have sufficient flexibility within existing programs to extend a response both within a sector and within a state if the implementing agency has the capacity to meet the additional need/caseload.

Protection issues loom large, with both IDPs and host populations suffering violations at the hands of militias, formal armed groups (SLA/M), and the SAF. DCHA programming will continue to attempt to address protection issues through coordinated activities and mainstreamed NGO interventions.

Protection and VAW programming will likely remain focused on large camps where DCHA can leverage its assistance for greatest possible impact and where there is more consistent over-land access.

More "political" work such as supporting nascent peace processes is limited primarily to regional capitals, but may be expanded if local partners have good networks in areas outside of the capitals. More experimental programming in more rural population centers will be difficult, particularly as our understanding of the actors in the region remains limited and access to rural areas unreliable.

Conclusion:

The Darfur security situation may deteriorate until opposition forces complete their realignment (three SLAs, NRF, G19, and JEM). Chadian government and Sudanese government support to individual groups in each country may determine whether violence increases or decreases. A vital and credible force is needed to secure Darfur. The Government of National Unity (GNU) must seriously start supporting humanitarian operations. Fighters must be kept outside IDP camps.

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